Rezensionen – Comptes rendus – Reviews

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The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Theology (OUP, 2016) is a splendid and hefty volume (832 pp.) that provides a comprehensive overview of Muslim theologies from their earliest manifestations until the present. A collection of forty-one innovative articles, the volume widens the scope of scholarship to include geographical areas and theological topics that have remained explored. Indeed, the collection ventures to cover the entire sweep of Islamic theology. In doing so, it pays due attention to the reception and development of Islamic theologies in diverse geographical locations – Iran and Central Asia, Yemen, Egypt, Ottoman lands, and the Indian Subcontinent. The volume even makes its way into the modern period; Wielandt's article discusses the challenges that arose for Muslim theology from the dominance of European colonialism and "western-type modern civilization's technical achievements," social and political values.

Sabine Schmidtke, the editor of the volume, acknowledges that given certain limitations of the field, the collection of articles is more of a guide to the nature and development of Islamic theologies than it is a comprehensive overview of them. The limitations she alludes to are now familiar to those working within any of the fields treated in the volume, and they will also be apparent to anyone who reads Schmidtke's introduction. Many works in the field remain unpublished. A staggering number are still unstudied, and the vast majority have not yet been translated into European languages.

The introduction to the volume, authored by Schmidtke, is a useful essay that discusses the current state of scholarship on leading Muslim theologians and the movements that they engendered. Schmidtke describes the editions that have recently been published in the field, notes some of the works that remain extant in manuscripts, and draws attention to the authors who have been given attention and to those who deserve further attention. The reader seeking guidance on the published and unpublished sources in the field would find no better place to begin than here.

The volume presents Islamic theologies diachronically. Part one, the most detailed, is devoted to the origins of Muʿtazilism, its formative and early middle periods, and the reception of Shīʿī theology among Zaydīs and Twelvers. It is also deals with the predecessors of Ashʿarism, Ibadi theology, the Karramiyya, Maturidism, Ismaili theology, and Sufi theological thought. Part two consists of case studies on intellectual interactions of Islamic theologies. Part three focuses on the later middle and early modern period. Part four consists of case studies that examine the impact of social history on Islamic theology. Part five addresses theological thought from the end of the early modern period to the present.

Among the great achievements of the volume are the following: coverage of the gamut of Islamic theologies, including Ashʿarism, Ibadi theology, the Karramiyya, Maturidism, Ismaili theology, and Sufi theological thought; investigations into the ways that the *mutakallimūn* engaged with other intellectual schools of thought (including the *falāsifa* and *Ismaʿīlīs*); treatments of the "intercommunal exchanges" between Muslims and Christian as well as Jewish thinkers; and examinations of intramural discussions among Muslim theologians that shaped core doctrinal positions.

One article in particular, Zysow's lucid and insightful exposition of Karrāmī theological cosmology, expresses a profound appreciation for the ways that Karrāmī doctrinal positions developed through engagement with other social and intellectual movements – Muʿtazilis, Ashʿarites, and Māturīdis (256–257). In his exposition of Karrāmī theology, Zysow persuasively argues that the Karrāmī doctrine of the spatialization of God – which opponents of the Karramiyya dismissed as a naïve kind of anthropomorphism – is in fact based on an elaborate philosophical cosmology that betrays an influence of Stoicism. Zysow persuades his reader that Karrāmī theologians, just like the Muʿtazila and other theological schools, engaged in serious reflection on core issues, including the nature of religious belief, God's attributes, and divine causality. A reader interested in understanding the ways that the Karrāmiyya delved into such issues would do well to begin with Zysow's exposition.

The volume's expansive approach and extensive scope are significant. The volume recognizes that the topics discussed by Muslim theologians (*mutakallimūn*) were wide in scope, including cosmology, political theory, logic, and causality. Furthermore, it appreciates that as a social force, the discipline of dialectical theology (*kalām*) defined the identity of Islamic schools of thought and that it shaped non-Muslim (especially Jewish and Christian) social and intellectual movements. Proceeding on the notion that the methodologies deployed by Muslim theologians are "highly variegated" and that they exhibit a "complex interdependence," the volume successfully places diverse

movements – from the Karramiyya to the Ibadiyya to the Ismailiyya – in conversation with one another. And it accomplishes this feat by venturing deep into unexplored territory – theologies that emerged in Central Asia, Ottoman lands, the Yemen, and the Indian subcontinent.

The expansive scope of the volume's treatment of theologies is evinced in the articles devoted to Ashʿarī theology and its wide reception in Muslim institutions of learning. Taken as a whole, these articles enable the reader to discern the many ways that Ashʿarī theology was refracted in Islamic intellectual history. Serrano Ruano's article ventures into the reception of Ashʿarī theology in North Africa and al-Andalus – where the school doctrine was publicly acknowledged – by describing the way that figures like Abū Bakr Ibn al-ʿArabī, who studied directly under Ghazālī and brought his books to al-Andalus, formed part of a broader trajectory of Ashʿarite theology. Eichner pays due attention to the importance that theological handbooks or manuals played in the lengthy process through which Avicennian philosophy became integrated into Sunnī theology; and she underscores that Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī was the most important channel through which this process took place.

Spevack's article on Egyptian Ashʿarism focuses on the role that centres of learning played in the development "from North Africa to Persia to the Levant" from the 12th century until the present day (534–535). Importantly, the author identifies three mainstays of the theological and legal education of Egyptian scholars: the study of logic and *kalām*; the prominent influence of the Persian and Maghribī "scholarly verifiers" who emphasized the role of *taḥqīq* – "giving evidential grounds … for a scientific proposition" (quoting el-Rouwayheb); and the prominence of the commentary as the literary genre of choice for scholars, which Spevack takes as evidence for the vibrancy and originality of Ashʿarī scholarship that took place in Egypt (542–543). One of the important take-aways of Spevack's article is that the Egyptian Ashʿarites scholars worked "unencumbered by the absolute reliance on *taqlīd*" ('following the opinions of others without knowing their proofs') and that the evaluation the late 19th century Muslim reformists and Orientalists was not based on firm textual evidence but speculation (544).

In her innovative excursus, Crone focuses on the way that certain "ungodly" cosmologies and methods of scepticism that emerged in late antique thought were assimilated into Muslim theology. Crone uses the term "ungodly" to refer to thinkers (often labelled *zindīqs* or *mulḥids*) who denied that God had created the world from nothing, or who denied government, the ultimate judgment of the world or any form of afterlife (103). The term "ungodly" in her vocabulary can refer to Marcionites, Bardesanites, or Manicheans – branches that stemmed from Christian communities but had become so heavily Iranized in early Islamic times

that they were no longer recognizable as Christians. Such loose clusters of individuals were not cohesive enough to form united social and intellectual movements. Because they were considered neither Muslims nor true adherents of the religions they had left behind, and because they seemed to have lost faith in any positive religion or even any God, they were often classified as dualists (104–105).

One of the important insights of Crone's article is that Muslim theologians engaged with thinkers who lacked a positive religion or conviction in a deity (105), and that such engagement led to the assimilation of certain argumentative techniques within *kalām*. Such techniques were designed to induce scepticism; and Muslim theologians assimilated such techniques – Crones names *takāfuʾ al-adilla* ("equivalence of proof") as an example – into theological argumentation (110).

El-Rouyaheb's contribution provides insight into the way that Muslim theologians assimilated or naturalized Greek logic into *kalām*, a process that was underway by the mid- and late eleventh centuries when "Eastern" Muslim theologians began studying Avicennian philosophy. El-Rouwayheb notes that Ghazālī played a role in this process by promoting Greek logic to theologians and jurists (412); and he notes that after Ghazālī, theologians from the Ashʿarī and Māturīdī schools continued to write works on logic. Furthermore, and more broadly, he describes the robust tradition of "logically informed theology" in the 14th through 19th centuries (culminating with Sanūsī, 426), and he documents how such logically informed theology became integrated into the curricula of learning in most parts of the Islamic world, and he points out that this took place despite the protests against the naturalization process, underscoring that logic was considered necessary for theological training and a communal duty for Muslims. In addition to describing the various kinds of analogical reasoning that constituted the mainstay of logical reasoning in Muslim theology, El-Rouwayheb also provides a lucid and exemplary exposition of the way that Ibn Taymiyya reasoned about the syllogism and analogy.

Although I cannot discuss each article contained in this impressive substantial collection of articles, let me conclude by stating that the *Oxford Handbook of Islamic Theology* is a go-to place for the latest scholarship on Islamic theologies that flourished in diverse Islamic lands, and for lucid expositions of a number of philosophical and theological difficulties that the *mutakallimūn* sought to resolve. It is also a brilliant introduction to the ways that the Muʿtazila, the Ashʿarī and Māturidī schools of thought (among others) were refracted in the Islamic intellectual tradition.